

No man prospers in the mechanic or manufacturing arts at this day, who treads in the footsteps of his ancestors. By reason of the application of science and the multiplication and great improvement of labor-saving machines, old practices have been superceded by new and better ones—all has thus been changed, all improved.

A useful discovery in these arts is no sooner made in one country or in one district, than a knowledge of it is disseminated by means of the press, through every civilized land, almost with the rapidity of the wind, and it becomes known and adopted wherever it can be useful. But in husbandry the case has been different. We have, to a ruinous extent, in many parts of the country, persevered in the practices of our fathers, which, though adapted to their time and the circumstances of a newly settled country, are ill suited to an exhausted soil or the present age of improvement. We too must call science and the press to our aid, if we would successfully compete in the business of farming, with the well cultivated countries of the old continent, or with the highly improved districts of our own. The agriculture of England has doubled its products in the last half century; and the productions of Scotland have been more than quadrupled in the same period. In France, men of profound science have successfully devoted their talents to the improvement of the soil; and the government has efficiently aided their efforts by the establishment of schools of practical and scientific instruction in husbandry and by pecuniary aids to her agricultural societies. There the soil has been improving under the new system of husbandry; here it has been deteriorating under the old. But the spirit of agricultural improvement is abroad in the land. It has already done much, and with the aid of agricultural societies and of agricultural periodicals, which your committee are happy to say are increasing in number and usefulness, the benign influence of which will soon be manifest in every department of husbandry, and in every section of our country. Your committee therefore, with a view of extending the benefits arising to agriculture by the formation of agricultural societies, have reported a bill for the encouragement of such a society in each of the counties of this State, which authorises, upon the subscription and actual payment over to the treasurer thereof, the sum of not less than 200 dollars, that the like sum of 200 dollars shall be paid out of the State Treasury to said society, the whole to be applied by the several societies in premiums for the best stock, farming utensils, crops, &c. Such encouragement, your committee believe, would greatly tend to the improvement of the most valuable breeds of stock and the increased productiveness of the soil, as it would not only rouse a spirit of competition, but would create inquiry among the agriculturists as to the best mode to arrive at success.

Your committee, in furtherance of the suggestion in reference to the benign influence of agricultural periodicals, would here contend for the value of reading to all practical cultivators of the soil, and defend what is contemptuously called "book farming;" the value of knowledge to agriculture to be derived from books, and the improve-